

## The Song of Solomon

### The Author, Title, and Date of Song of Solomon

1. Author: God, through Solomon – *1.1 - Note also 1.5; 3.7, 9. 11; 8.11, 12; 1 Ki 4.32*
1. Title is taken from the first phrase of the book
  - a. Hebrew – שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשֹׁלֹמֹה = “Song of the Songs which is from Solomon” or, “Song of Songs”
  - b. Greek – ἄσμα αἰσμάτων οὗ εἰστιν τῷ Σαλῳμον = “Song of the Songs which is from Solomon”
2. Date: Some time during Solomon’s reign.

### The Background and Setting of Song of Solomon.

1. Background
  - a. Solomon was the son of David, and King of Israel.
  - b. This is an ode, or song, dominated by two characters: Solomon and his first wife, a Shulammitte who is not named. The song describes their courtship, wedding, and marriage.
  - c. The song is poetry, using metaphor and euphemistic language, to give insight into the beauty of married love, without becoming crude or crass.
  - d. “The daughters of Jerusalem” and the brothers of the Shulammitte, also appear in minor roles.
2. Historical Setting
  - a. There is no real historical setting, other than Solomon’s marriage to this woman.
  - b. The song is not a narrative, but a poetic dialogue.

### The Purpose of Song of Solomon

1. The purpose of this book is to extol the beauty and joy of the physical aspect of love in marriage, using veiled language to draw out the wonder and beauty of this love.
2. Key verses: *2.7; 3.5; 5.8 . . . 6.3; 7.10 . . . 5.1*

### The Message of Song of Solomon

1. The physical aspect of love in marriage is show to be beautiful, good, and desirable, given as a gift from God. (Elliott Johnson)
  - a. beautiful – *2.14; 4.1-15; 5.10-16; 6.4-7; 7.1-8*
  - b. good – *2.7; 3.1-4; 5.2; 7.10*
  - c. desirable – *2.3-6; 3.1-4; 4.1-15; 5.2, 10-16; 7.1-10*
2. The heart of this is restated in *He 13.4*

## The Structure of Song of Solomon

1. Simple Outline
  - a. Marital Love is for Marriage. *chs. 1-3*
  - b. Marital Love is Enjoyable and Desirable. *chs. 4-6*
  - c. Marital Love is Mature *chs 7-8*
2. Longer Outline (MacArthur)
  - a. The Courtship: “*Leaving*” – *1.2-3.5*
    - 1) 1.2-2.7 The Lovers’ Remembrances
    - 2) 2.8-3.5 The Lovers’ Expression of Reciprocal Love
  - b. The Wedding: “*Cleaving*” – *3.6-5.1*
    - 1) 3.6-11 The Kingly Bridegroom
    - 2) 4.1-5.1a The Wedding and First Night Together
    - 3) 5.1b God’s Approval
  - c. The Marriage: “*Weaving*” – *5.2-8.14*
    - 1) 5.2-6.3 The First Major Disagreement
    - 2) 6.4-8.4 The Restoration
    - 3) 8.5-14 Growing in Grace

## The Themes of Song of Solomon

1. No formal theological themes.
2. Main theme: Exaltation of the sanctity and beauty of marital intimacy.
  - a. Its beauty – *1.5, 10, 15, 16; 2.14; 4.1-6, 10-15; 5.10-16; 6.4-7; 7.1-9*
  - b. Its commitment – *2.7; 3.1-8; 5.8; 6.3; 7.10-13*
  - c. Its enjoyment – *1.2, 13, 16; 2.3; 4.1-6, 10-15; 5.10-16; 7.1-9*

## Interpretive Issues in Song of Solomon

1. What is the book about? Four interpretive approaches.
  - a. Allegorical approaches
    - 1) Love of YHWH for Israel
    - 2) Love of Christ for His Church
  - b. Typological approach – Communion of Christ and the Believer
  - c. Normal approach – The Glory of Love in Marriage
    - 1) Describes Solomon’s courtship, wedding, and marriage to the Shulammitic girl.
    - 2) n.b. Marriage (and its intimacy) was God’s idea.
2. Are two men involved here, or just one?
  - a. Two men – Samuel Schultz
    - 1) The Shulammitic is transferred from the vineyard to the palace.
    - 2) She rejects Solomon’s advances, all the time yearning for her shepherd hero, whom she is finally able to return to.
  - b. One man – J. Vernon McGee, H.A. Ironside
    - 1) The Shulammitic is from a poor Ephraimite family.
    - 2) Poverty forces her to work in the vineyard, where she meets a shepherd.
    - 3) The shepherd leaves, promising to return.
    - 4) One day, the cry is heard: “The King is Coming!”
    - 5) To her surprise, he is her shepherd . . . come to take her to their wedding.